

### **The Development of Mindfulness and Meditative Composure (Samādhi)**

This relationship between the development of the four applications of mindfulness (catunna satipaṭ ṭ hānā bhāvanā) and integral meditative composure is presented in SN 47.4 Sāla Sutta:

The mental qualities of remaining ardent (ātāpī) and fully aware (sampajāna), which are standard in the descriptions of integral mindfulness, are here directly related to remaining unified (ekodibhūta), with a limpid mind (vippasannacittā), composed (samāhitā), with singleness of mind (ekaggacittā). All of these latter terms indicate the onset of integral meditative composure<sup>1</sup>.

This relationship between integral mindfulness and integral meditative composure is also embedded in the seven factors of awakening and the four jhānas. Regarding the relationship between the applications of mindfulness and the four jhānas, we find the following instructions in AN 8.63 Saṅkhattadesita Sutta.

By employing mindfulness and dhamma-investigation we can learn to identify the mental factors which can be developed and strengthened in order to enter and remain in the first jhāna. Mindfulness and full awareness are then used to develop calm (samatha) and clear seeing (vipassanā). This further training in the development of calm and clear seeing is presented in MN 73 Mahāvaccha Sutta.

These two mental factors are then optimally yoked together. This is stated in MN 149 Sahāsaḷ āyatanika Sutta.

Thus, these two concomitant mental factors of calm and clear seeing lead to liberating knowledge (vijjā). This is also stated in AN 2.32 Vijjābhāgiyā Sutta.

Defiled by passion, the mind is not released. Defiled by ignorance, discernment does not develop. Thus, monks, from the fading away of passion there is liberation of mind (cetovimutti). From the fading away of ignorance there is liberation through discernment (paññāvimutti).

Both mindfulness and full awareness are necessary mental factors in the development of either calm or clear seeing. And both calm and clear seeing are necessary for the full development of jhāna, eventually culminating in liberation.

The necessity of the mental factors of mindfulness and full awareness right from the outset of one's meditation practice can be understood by thinking of them metaphorically as our two "legs" which we need to walk the path. These two legs, with repeated exercise, then strengthen into calm abiding and clear seeing. As for which component should be developed first, calm abiding or clear seeing, AN 4.170 Yuganaddha Sutta states.

From this statement we can see that the development of meditation can begin with either the development of calm or clear seeing. We should also keep in mind that at advanced stages of practice both of these need to be united for the arising of direct gnosis.

Therefore, beginning with mindfulness, we start to apply our theoretical understanding of the dhamma in order to develop this understanding into experiential discernment (bhāvanāmayā paññā) wherein we eventually come to thoroughly understand the nature of all conditioned phenomena (dhammathitiñāṇa) according to specifically assignable conditionality (idappaccayatā). This thorough knowledge of conditioned phenomena (conditioned arising, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and selflessness) culminates in liberation through discernment (paññāvimutti). This discernment liberation is the result of the direct gnosis of nibbāna (nibbāna ñāṇa), which is synonymous with gnosis of the elimination of mental outflows (khaḃeñāṇa).

### **The Seven Factors of Awakening (Satta Bojjhaṅgā)**

A mind that is pliant and adaptable has the capacity to discover the freedom of awakening. And it is mindfulness that assists us in being fully present and aware. When mindfulness occurs together with full awareness it is non-reactive and inclusive. This combination of mindfulness and full awareness arises through a volitional choice to be attentive to whatever objects

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1 This discourse also indicates the relationship between mindfulness and meditative composure in order to know as they really are (yathābhūta ñāṇāya): the body, feelings, mind, and phenomena; fully understand (pariññāya): the body, feelings, mind, and phenomena; and remain detached from (visaṃyuttā): the body, feelings, mind, and phenomena

present themselves to awareness as an open, ongoing process, without getting caught up and held captive by habitual reactions.

However, although mindfulness is a mental quality that we can allow to arise, and even learn to refine, somewhat paradoxically, it isn't something that we can forcefully control. Rather, we train the mind by recognizing the benefits and usefulness of mindfulness when it is present, and becoming accustomed to sustaining this quality of flexible, clear awareness. Therefore, this training is experiential. We have to experience and recognize it for ourselves as it is occurring.

With mindfulness and full awareness, we can further investigate our immediate experience in terms of the four applications of mindfulness, which provide our practice with a foundation to help orient us, and the four exertions, which assist us to train in the development and maintenance of skillful qualities and the abandonment of unskillful ones. These activities are aspects of dhamma-investigation.

As we develop some appreciation for these modes of mental engagement, and become accustomed to sustaining dhamma-investigation, this generates balanced enthusiasm and refined levels of energy that occur due to experiencing the flexibility of mental clarity. Attention and energy allow the mind to remain clear and stable without getting lost in the content of associated thoughts and memories. This developmental process is described in SN 46.3 Sīlasutta.

While he discriminates that dhamma with discernment, examines it, makes an investigation of it, his energy is aroused without slackening. Whenever, monks, a monk's energy is aroused without slackening as he discriminates that dhamma with discernment, examines it, makes an investigation of it, on that occasion the awakening factor of energy is aroused by the monk, on that occasion the monk develops the awakening factor of energy, on that occasion the awakening factor of energy comes to fulfillment through development in the monk.

At this stage mindfulness can seem to occur effortlessly for extended periods of time. The mind and body feel light and exuberant. The joy and pleasure of simply being present arise, and we can learn to recognize and accustom ourselves to this experience as it occurs. Again, this is a natural process that arises when the conditions are appropriate, and is not effectively engendered by attempting to force the mind to be a certain way. SN 46.3 continues.

The onset of mental joy prepares the way for the arising of the remaining factors of awakening and the occurrence of meditative composure. SN 46.3 gives a good overview of these factors, which we will begin to explore in greater detail on the next page.

It's also important to understand that the purpose of this developmental process is not to *stop* the mind from functioning, but to *train* the mind to function with greater clarity and more subtle awareness. This is why this practice is included in the *training* in heightened mind (*adhicittasikkhā*).

### **Integral Meditative Composure (Sammāsamādhi)**

The Pāli noun *samādhi* is related to the verb *samādahati*, which means “to put together,” “to join,” “to combine,” “to collect,” and the past participle of the same verb, *samāhita*, meaning “collected,” “composed.” Thus, *samādhi* indicates “collecting” one's mind, and specifically in the context of *sammāsamādhi*, the mind composed in meditation. It is this composed mental unification which is termed singleness of mind (*cittakaggatā*). It is also called *jhāna*.

According to the Pāli discourses the four *jhānas* play an essential role in the development of the noble eightfold path. All four main Nikāyas define integral meditative composure (*sammāsamādhi*) as *jhāna*. The four *jhānas* are also given as the training of heightened mind (*adhicittasikkhā*), as well as the faculty of composure (*samādhindriya*) and the strength of composure (*samādhibala*) as practiced by a noble disciple (*ariyasāvaka*). According to the suttas and the earliest strata of canonical commentary and para-canonical commentary, all of these factors have to be engaged and developed for full awakening to occur.

This means that liberation through discernment (*paññāvimutti*) cannot happen without mastery of at least the first *jhāna*. This integral relationship between *jhāna* and discernment (*paññā*) is explicit in the description of the noble eightfold path, where *jhāna* is given as the definition of integral meditative composure, and is also explicitly stated in other discourses as well. An unequivocal example of this integral relationship is clearly expressed in Dhammapada 371-372.

And this relationship is also stated in AN 9.36 Jhāna Sutta:

*I say, monks, the elimination of the mental outflows depends on the first jhāna.*

DN 2 Sāmaññaphala Sutta tells us that the elimination of the mental outflows (*āsavas*) can occur while remaining in the fourth *jhāna*.

As the elimination of the mental outflows requires the development of meditative composure regarding the rise and fall of the five aggregates of clinging — and AN 4.41 Samādhi Sutta tells us that it does — then one is necessarily developing meditative composure regarding the rise and fall of the aggregates of clinging here, specifically in the context of the four noble truths, by engaging the mind thus composed, purified and cleansed, unblemished, free from impurities, pliant, malleable, and steady in the fourth jhāna. [1](#)

Again, AN 9.36 states that the elimination of the mental outflows depends on attaining at least the first jhāna. If one can end the āsavas through the fourth jhāna as stated in DN 2, then one can do the same from within the first jhāna.

This understanding of liberation through discernment requiring mastery of at least the first jhāna is also implied in discourses which state that one liberated through discernment doesn't abide in any of the formless attainments (MN 70) or have any of the five mundane higher gnoses (SN 12.70). It is also implicit in the description of the “white lotus ascetic” (samaṇa puṇḍarīka) offered in AN 4.87 Samaṇa macala Putta Sutta, where it is said that this type of arahant doesn't abide personally experiencing the eight deliverances (aṭṭha vimokkha), yet has both liberation of mind (cetovimutti) and liberation through discernment. Liberation of mind requires mastery of at least the first jhāna.

#### Notes

1. The Mahāvihāra commentarial tradition maintains that one should emerge from jhāna in order to develop insight. However, this isn't stated in the suttas. Ven. Bodhi, *In the Buddha's Words* (p. 379):  
“According to [MN 64], to abandon the five lower fetters, a monk first attains one of the four jhānas or one of the three lower formless attainments; the constituent factors of the fourth formless attainment are too subtle to serve as objects of insight. Directing his attention to the factors constituting the jhāna or formless attainment, he subsumes them under the five aggregates: as included in form (omitted in relation to the formless attainments), feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness. Having done so, he contemplates these factors, now classified into the five aggregates, as marked by the three characteristics: impermanence, suffering, and nonself (expanded into eleven headings). As contemplation advances, at a certain point his mind turns away from all conditioned things and focuses upon the deathless element, nibbāna.”  
-In an endnote to this passage Ven. Bodhi differentiates between the Mahāvihāra commentaries and the suttas as follows:  
“The commentarial method of explanation stipulates that the meditator emerges from the jhāna attainment and practices insight contemplation with a mind made sharp and supple by the jhāna. However, the suttas themselves say nothing about emerging from the jhāna. If one reads the suttas alone, without the commentaries, it seems as if the meditator examines the factors within the jhāna itself.”  
-Indeed, apart from the Mahāvihāra commentaries, the Sarvāstivāda, Sautrāntika, and Yogācāra commentarial traditions have always maintained that insight should optimally be developed *within* jhāna.

#### The Pāṭi Jhāna Formula

The standard jhāna formula is as follows:

Idha bhikkhave viviceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamam jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. (DN 22 Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta)

Here monks, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful phenomena, a monk enters and remains in the first jhāna, which includes directed thought and evaluation, as well as joy and pleasure born of seclusion.

We can examine the jhāna formula by comparing the various terms mentioned in it with other occurrences of those and related terms found throughout the suttas.

#### Quite secluded from sensual pleasures (vivicceva kāmehi)

The first relevant sutta passage is one that occurs in various suttas. For example, AN 6.63 Nibbedhika Sutta states.

It is clear that the sensual pleasures referred to in the jhāna formula that are to be withdrawn from prior to entering jhāna, include these five types of external objects referred to as strands of sensual pleasure which are desirable, lovely, agreeable, endearing, sensually enticing, and tantalizing.

There are a couple of points worth mentioning here. Firstly, these five strands of sensual pleasure are all *external* sensory objects. As such, they correspond to objects within the five external sensory spheres (bāhirāyatana). Thus, these five sensory objects do not include in-and-out breathing, which is considered internal, nor the internal felt-sense of the body. The strands

of sensual pleasure also do not include the recognition of unattractiveness with regard to the thirty-one parts of the body and the nine stages of corpse decomposition. The recognition of unattractiveness is a mental phenomenon.

Secondly, these five strands of sensual pleasure are those external sensory objects that are considered to be *desirable, lovely, agreeable, endearing, sensually enticing, and tantalizing*. And so it isn't *all* sensory objects whatsoever that the meditator need to withdraw from. The meditator needs to withdraw from those external sensory objects which are sensually enticing and tantalizing, as stated here. This withdrawal is facilitated by removing oneself from inappropriate environments for meditation and by abandoning the hindrance of desire for sensual pleasure (kāmacchanda). Both are necessary prerequisites for entering the first jhāna.

As for the relationship between the withdrawal from inappropriate environments and external sensory objects MN 150 Nagaravindeyya Sutta informs us that one practicing for the removal of passion resorts to a remote location.

Continuing with AN 6.63, we can see that a clear distinction is made between sensual pleasures (kāma) and the five strands of sensual pleasure (kāmagunā). After defining the five strands of sensual pleasure in the previous passage, the Buddha states:

But monks, these are not sensual pleasures (kāma). They are called strands of sensual pleasure (kāmagunā) in the discipline of the noble ones.

Here the Buddha is differentiating sensual pleasures (kāma) which are the resolve of passion (saṅkapparāga), from the beautiful external sensory objects of that passion, pertaining to which the wise remove desire. The removal of this passionate desire is a major theme of the dhammavinaya. This removal begins with practicing sense restraint (indriya saṁvara), developing the thought of renunciation (nekkhamma vitakka), and is progressively accomplished through the integration of the three path aggregations of ethical conduct (sīla), meditation (samādhi), and discernment (paññā). This eventually culminates in the fruition of the path which includes the complete elimination of the mental outflow of sensual pleasure (kāmasava).

What these discourses imply is that sensory objects are not inherently “kāma” in and of themselves. MN 13 Mahādukkhakhandha Sutta tells us that the strands of sensual pleasure are the allure of kāma. SN 3.12 Pañcarāja Sutta confirms that the very forms, sounds, odors, flavors, and tactual objects which are agreeable to one person, are disagreeable to another.

Thus external sensory objects are only strands of sensual pleasure if they are agreeable, sensually enticing and tantalizing. And as Itivuttaka 72 informs us, renunciation is the escape from sensual pleasures.

In SN 36.19 Pañcakaṅga Sutta the Buddha tells Ven. Ānanda that whatever pleasure or happiness arises in dependence on the five strands of sensual pleasure is called sensual pleasure. And MN 66 Laṭṭhikopama Sutta states that this sensual pleasure is a: “filthy pleasure, a worldly pleasure, an ignoble pleasure. And I say that this pleasure is not to be cultivated, not to be developed, not to be pursued, that it is to be feared.”

Based on these statements it follows that any visible objects of the nine stages of corpse decomposition (DN 22, MN 10) associated with the recognition of unattractiveness, or the visible sphere consisting of “the ridges and hollows, the rivers and ravines, the tracts of stumps and thorns, the mountains and irregular places” associated with the recognition of wilderness (MN 121), which are engaged for developing calm (samatha) in the course of attaining jhāna, cannot be strands of sensual pleasure. If they were, any concomitant pleasure and happiness which would arise in dependence upon these sensory objects would be inappropriate and not worth development (bhāvanā).

This distinction between the five strands of sensual pleasure and the appropriate objects to be employed for mental development is indicated in SN 47.6 Sakuṇagghi Sutta, which clearly differentiates between the five strands of sensual pleasure and the four applications of mindfulness (satipaṭṭhāna). In this discourse one is instructed to avoid wandering into the range of the five strands of sensual pleasure and instead remain in one's own proper range of the four satipaṭṭhānas.

With the four applications of mindfulness as the cause for entering and remaining in jhāna, one doesn't attend to, or partake in any of the five external strands of sensual pleasure. MN 26 Pāsārāsī Sutta states that this allegorically blinds Māra. And as SN 35.115 Dutiyamārapāsa Sutta tells us, if one doesn't seek delight or grasp onto any sensually enticing phenomenon, then one is said to have escaped from Māra's snare.

**Secluded from unskillful phenomena (vivicca akusalehi dhammehi)**

Returning to the jhāna formula, we can next investigate the withdrawal from unskillful phenomena (akusala dhammas). MN 13 Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta states that bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, and mental misconduct (kāyena duccharita, vācāya duccharita, manasā duccharita) have sensuality as their cause and source. MN 9 Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta elaborates on these three types of misconduct by giving the standard tenfold list of misconduct.

AN 3.102 Paṃsudhova Sutta tells us that this level of bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct are coarse defilements. This sutta goes on to state that thoughts of sensual pleasure, thoughts of aversion, and thoughts of harmfulness are considered middling defilements. And thoughts of one's friends and relatives, thoughts of one's homeland, and thoughts of not wanting to be disliked are considered subtle defilements. With the abandoning of all of these types of defilement there remain only thoughts related to the dhamma. But one still has to develop one's mind so that it grows steady inwardly, settles down, and grows unified and composed.

And in SN 45.22 Akusaladhamma Sutta, we read that wrong view, wrong resolve, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong meditative composure are unskillful phenomena. Conversely, the same discourse states that skillful phenomena are right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditative composure. And as we have already seen, right meditative composure (sammāsamādhi) is defined as jhāna.

And so it's evident that the unskillful phenomena that are to be withdrawn from prior to entering jhāna and while remaining in jhāna are all coarse, middling, and subtle defilements which are unskillful dhammas of body, speech, and mind. And this is accomplished by developing the noble eightfold path.

### **The Hindrances: Five Things Abandoned in the First Jhāna**

Before we investigate the jhāna formula any further, we can take a look at what specifically is abandoned in order to enter and remain in the first jhāna, namely, the five hindrances (pañcanīvaraṇā). MN 43 Mahāvedalla Sutta tells us. MN 39 Mahāsaṃyutta Sutta elaborates.

The abandoning of the five hindrances are a necessary but not sufficient condition for the attainment of the first jhāna. The arising of the five factors of the first jhāna are also necessary. With both of these conditions satisfied — the abandoning of the five hindrances and the arising of the five jhāna factors — the meditator has fulfilled the necessary and sufficient conditions of the first jhāna.

### **The Jhāna Factors: Five Phenomena the First Jhāna Is Endowed With**

Returning to the jhāna formula, we can take a look at the phenomena which are present in the first jhāna. MN 43 Mahāvedalla Sutta tells us that the first jhāna is endowed with five factors:

The first jhāna has five factors. Here, when a monk has entered the first jhāna, there occurs directed thought (vitakka), evaluation (vicāra), joy (pīti), pleasure (sukha), and singleness of mind (cittakaggatā). That is how the first jhāna has five factors.

### **With directed thought and evaluation (savitakkam savicāram)**

In the thought-world of the Pāṇini discourses, directed thought (vitakka) is closely related to resolve (saṅkappa). MN 78 Samānāmuṇḍika Sutta tells us that unskillful resolves cease in the first jhāna and that skillful resolves (kusalā saṅkappā) consisting of the resolve of renunciation (nekkhammasaṅkappa), the resolve of non-aversion (abyāpādasāṅkappa), and the resolve of harmlessness (avihiṃsāsaṅkappa) don't cease until the second jhāna. This provides some context as to the meaning and significance of directed thought and evaluation (vicāra) in the standard jhāna formula. The Samānāmuṇḍika Sutta MN78 states.

Of course, any experienced meditator with proficiency in attention training knows that adventitious discursive thinking inhibits the calming of the mind. And so the directed thought and evaluation of the first jhāna is more refined than adventitious discursiveness. It's the skillful application of the cognitive faculty to a particular theme of focus, without lapsing from that focus. To be effective, directed thought and evaluation must necessarily work in concert with the concomitant application of mindfulness and sustained attention. In this way, directed thought and evaluation help to serve as causal factors for the abandoning of the hindrances, the arising of the other jhāna factors, as well as aiding in the maintenance of the jhāna factors once the first jhāna has been successfully entered.

This understanding of directed thought and evaluation finds support in the early para-canonical Peṭ akopadesa, which in its analysis of the jhāna factors is closer to the suttas than are the definitions given in the Abhidhammapiṭ aka. Regarding directed thought and evaluation in the first jhāna formula, Peṭ akopadesa 7.72 offers the following word-commentary:

*-Here, for fulfilling non-passion he thinks the thought of renunciation. Here, for fulfilling non-aggression he thinks the thought of non-aversion. Here, for fulfilling non-delusion he thinks the thought of harmlessness.*

*-Here, for fulfilling non-passion he is secluded from sensual pleasures. Here, for fulfilling non-aggression and fulfilling non-delusion he is secluded from unskillful phenomena. And so he enters and remains in the first jhāna, which includes directed thought and evaluation, as well as joy and pleasure born of seclusion.*

*-Directed thought: There are three kinds of directed thought, namely the thought of renunciation, the thought of non-aversion, and the thought of harmlessness.*

*-Here, directed thought is the first instance while evaluation is the evaluation of what is thereby received.*

*-Just as when a man sees someone approaching in the distance he does not yet know whether it is a woman or a man, but when he has received [the recognition] that “it is a woman” or “it is a man” or that “it is of such color” or that “it is one of such shape,” then when he has thought this he further scrutinizes, “How then, is he ethical or unethical, rich or poor?” This is examination. With directed thought he fixes. With examination he moves about and turns over [what has been thought].*

*-And just as a winged bird first accumulates [speed] and then accumulates no more [speed when gliding], so too, directed thought is like the accumulation, and evaluation is like the outstretched wings which keeps preserving the directed thought and evaluation....*

*-Directed thought is like a text-reciter who does his recitation silently. Evaluation is like him simply contemplating it. Directed thought is like a lack of full comprehension (apariññā). Evaluation is like full comprehension (pariññā). Directed thought is the analytical understanding of language (niruttapaṭisambhidā) and the analytical understanding of knowledge (paṭibhānapaṭisambhidā). Evaluation is the analytical understanding of dhamma (dhammapaṭisambhidā) and the analytical understanding of meaning (atthapaṭisambhidā). Directed thought is the mind’s skill in pleasantness. Evaluation is the mind’s skill in endeavor. Directed thought is about this being skillful, this unskillful, about this to be developed, this to be abandoned, this to be verified. Evaluation is like the abandoning, the development, the verification.*

And so, in light of the above sutta and early commentarial passages we can see that narrowly interpreting vitakka and vicāra as “initial and sustained attention” or “initial and sustained intention” represents a later semantic shift in the meaning of these terms in the context of jhāna which isn’t supported by their occurrence in the suttas and early commentarial sources such as the Peṭ akopadesa. Moreover, in the list of mental factors given in MN 111, which the meditator can discern individually as they occur by employing clear seeing (anupadadhammavipassanā) while abiding in jhāna, we find vitakka as well as attention (manasikāra) and intention (cetanā) listed. If any of these three terms were synonyms for the same mental referent then there would be no way to differentiate between them, and it would have been pointless for this discourse to mention all three phenomena.

### **Joy and pleasure born of seclusion (vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ)**

The discourses differentiate between carnal joy and pleasure (sāmisā pīti and sukha) and non-carnal joy and pleasure (nirāmisā pīti and sukha). SN 36.31 Nirāmisā Sutta tells us that carnal joy and pleasure arise in dependence on the five strands of sensual pleasure, while non-carnal joy arises in the first two jhānas and non-carnal pleasure arises in the first three jhānas.

SN 48.40 Uppaṭṭi ipāṭi Sutta states that the pain faculty (dukkhindriya) ceases completely in the first jhāna, the unhappiness faculty (domanassindriya) ceases completely in the second jhāna, the pleasure faculty (sukhindriya) ceases completely in the third jhāna, and the happiness faculty (somanassindriya) ceases completely in the fourth jhāna.

SN 48.37 Dutiyavibhaṅga Sutta informs us that the pleasure and pain faculties are born of body contact (kāyasamphassa), whereas the happiness and unhappiness faculties are born of mind contact (manosamphassa).

Taking all of the above passages into consideration we can deduce that the non-carnal joy of the first jhāna is mental pleasure (cetasika sukha, i.e. somanassa) born of mind contact, and the non-carnal pleasure of the first jhāna is bodily pleasure (kāyika sukha) born of body contact.

This reading of these sutta sources accords with Peṭ akopadesa 7.72:

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2 It is also worth noting that Sautrāntika and Yogācāra commentators consistently define vitakka and vicāra as two types of “mental discourse” (manojalpa, lit: “mind-talk”). For example, Vasubandhu’s Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa defines vitakka as “mental discourse which investigates” (paryeṣako manojalpa) and vicāra as “mental discourse which reflects” (pratyaवेक्षको manojalpa). Vitakka is considered to be coarse (cittsyaudārikatā) and vicāra comparatively more subtle (cittsyasūkṣmatā).

*The twofold bodily and mental pain does not arise in one steadied in directed thought and evaluation, and the twofold bodily and mental pleasure does arise. The mental pleasure thus produced from directed thought is joy, while the bodily pleasure is bodily feeling.*

This understanding is also supported by the Vimuttimagga. The author of the Vimuttimagga was knowledgeable of and quotes from the Uppaṭṭi-pāṭi Sutta, the Paṭi-sambhidāmagga, the Vibhaṅga, and the Peṭṭakopadesa. And when commenting on the bathman simile for the first jhāna (e.g. DN 2, MN 119, etc.) he explains:

*Just as the bath-powder when inside and outside saturated with moisture, adheres and does not scatter, so the body of the meditator in the first jhāna is permeated with joy and pleasure from top to bottom, from the skullcap to the feet and from the feet to the skullcap, skin and hair, inside and outside. And he dwells without falling back. Thus he dwells like a Brahma god. [Q.] Joy (pīti) and pleasure (sukha) are said to be formless phenomena (arūpa-dhamma). How then can they stay permeating the body?*

*[A.] Name (nāma) depends on form (rūpa). Form depends on name. Therefore, if name has joy, form also has joy. If name has pleasure, form also has pleasure.*

Again, form born from joy causes tranquility of body, and when the entire body is tranquilized there is pleasure due to the tranquility of form. Therefore there is no contradiction.

To this we can add a couple of more points. First, due to the presence of directed thought and evaluation in the first jhāna, intermittent occurrences of mental unhappiness can still arise, as indicated in SN 48.40. Thus the singleness of mind of the first jhāna isn't necessarily as unified as in the higher jhānas. Secondly, when the meditator is steadied in the first jhāna, all of the jhāna factors work together to maintain what DN 9 calls an actual refined recognition of joy and pleasure born of seclusion (vivekajapītisukhasukhumasaccasaññā). Thus, while the singleness of mind of the first jhāna may not be as unified as in the higher jhānas, it is still a very refined samādhi. It takes considerable mental development in order to be able to successfully induce and maintain this level of heightened mind (adhicitta).

### **Singleness of mind (cittakaggatā)**

Although singleness of mind isn't mentioned in the standard formula of the first jhāna, likely because it isn't as prominent here as in the second jhāna, nevertheless, MN 43 lists it as one of the five jhāna factors. Moreover, MN 44 Culavedalla Sutta, defines meditative composure (samādhi) as singleness of mind:

It's also worth noting that the nimittas of meditative composure are given as the four applications of mindfulness.

Similarly, the faculty of meditative composure (samādhindriya) is defined as the attainment of singleness of mind by a noble disciple (ariyasāvaka) who has attained the path. SN 48.10 Indriyavibhaṅga Sutta.

And this definition of the faculty of meditative composure naturally includes jhāna as the eighth component of the noble eightfold path.

### **The Second Jhāna**

DN 22 Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta gives the standard formula for the second jhāna as follows:

With the stilling of directed thought and evaluation he enters and remains in the second jhāna, which has internal serenity and unification of mind free from thought and evaluation, and has joy and pleasure born of composure.

With the elimination of directed thought and evaluation in the second jhāna, the two factors of serenity-clarify (sampasādana) and mental unification (cetaso ekodibhāva) become prominent enough to be experientially distinguished. Just as the joy and pleasure born of seclusion and the concomitant expansive mind (mahaggatā citta) of the first jhāna opens up a whole new vista of experience not previously available, and display the limitations of conventional sensory cognition, now the serenity-clarify and mental unification experienced by the silent mind in the second jhāna reveal another new level of meditative composure.

Here the experience of the silent mind can be likened to the surface of a completely tranquil lake. This is serenity-clarify and mental unification. With this experience there is a definite sense of confidence in the quality of this internally composed level of samādhi, along with the subtle joy and pleasure thereby experienced, which DN 9 designates as an actual refined recognition of joy and pleasure born of composure (samādhijapītisukhasukhumasaccasaññā).

SN 48.40 states that any adventitious occurrence of unhappiness which may arise in the first jhāna due to the presence of directed thought and evaluation, ceases completely here in the second jhāna. What remains is the pleasure faculty

(sukhindriya) and the happiness faculty (somanassindriya), which in light of SN 48.37, in the second jhāna refers to bodily pleasure (kāyika sukha) and mental happiness (cetasika sukha, i.e. somanassa).

This reading of the relevant sutta passages is also supported by the word-commentary for the second jhāna given in Peṭ akopadesa 7.72:

*With the constant cultivation of this same directed thought and evaluation his mind becomes inclined there. Then the directed thought and evaluation seem gross to him, as well as the joy and pleasure born of renunciation, and so joy and delight born of composure arise instead.*

*His mind, [which] had evaluation as an object-support, becomes internally serenely-clarified with the stilling of these [two factors of the first jhāna]. The two phenomena, directed thought and evaluation, no longer need to be recollected, and what now can be served due to their stilling is the presently arisen unification which is singleness of mind. It is through unification that joy comes to fulfillment. The joy is the happiness faculty, while the pleasure is the pleasure faculty. The singleness of mind is meditative composure. So the second jhāna possesses four factors.*

### **The Third Jhāna**

DN 22 Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta gives the standard formula for the third jhāna as follows:

With the fading away of joy he remains equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experiences pleasure with the body; he enters and remains in the third jhāna of which the noble ones say, ‘Equanimous and mindful, he abides pleasantly.’

AN 9.42 tells us that the pleasure commonly referred to in the descriptions of the third jhāna is actually the pleasure of equanimity (upekkhāsukha). This accords well with SN 48.40, where it states that the pleasure faculty (sukhindriya) ceases in the third jhāna. What remains is the equanimity faculty (upekkhindriya) and the happiness faculty (somanassindriya), which in light of SN 48.37, in the third jhāna refers to bodily equanimity (kāyika upekkhā) and mental pleasure (cetasika sukha). DN 9 refers to the apperception of this experience as an actual refined recognition of equanimity (upekkhāsukhasukhumasaccasaññā).

Again, this conforms to the word-commentary offered in Peṭ akopadesa 7.72:

*With the fading away of joy he has abandoned what is comprised of wetness (i.e. joy). But happiness of mind still arises there, and when he investigates that, he gives attention only to equanimity. With the fading away of joy he remains equanimous, and as he still feels with the body the pleasure [of equanimity] induced by joy, he remains fully aware. Mindful and fully aware, equanimity comes to fulfillment.*

It is also worth noting that mindfulness and full awareness are given as dominant jhāna factors here in the third jhāna. This reveals the integral progression from the four applications of mindfulness as integral mindfulness continuing through to the third and fourth jhānas as integral meditative composure.

### **The Fourth Jhāna**

DN 22 Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta gives the standard formula for the fourth jhāna as follows:

With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the earlier passing away of happiness and unhappiness, he enters and remains in the fourth jhāna, which is without pleasure or pain, and includes the purity of equanimity and mindfulness.

SN 48.40 states that the happiness faculty (somanassindriya) ceases in the fourth jhāna. What remains is both bodily and mental equanimity (kāyika and cetasika upekkhā) as stated in SN 48.37, which DN 9 calls an actual refined recognition of neither pleasure nor pain (adukkhamasukhasukhumasaccasaññā).

Again, this agrees with Peṭ akopadesa 7.72:

*In the first jhāna the pain faculty ceases and in the second jhāna the unhappiness faculty ceases, so with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the earlier passing away of happiness and unhappiness, he enters and remains in the fourth jhāna, which is without pleasure or pain, and includes the purity of equanimity and mindfulness.*

*Here [previously] equanimity was still not clarified due to the presence of the four faculties, namely the pain faculty, the unhappiness faculty, the pleasure faculty, and the happiness faculty. With the cessation of these there is equanimity and full*



awareness.

*Here, it was due to the pleasure faculty and the happiness faculty that there was a lack of mindfulness, and with their cessation he becomes possessed of mindfulness. And it was due to the pain faculty and the unhappiness faculty that there was a lack of full awareness, and with their cessation he becomes fully aware. So with the clarification of equanimity, [which is accompanied by neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling,] he becomes mindful and fully aware, and there is singleness of mind. This is called the fourth jhāna.*

### Summary of the Jhāna Factors (Jhānaṅga)

As we have seen, the Peṭ akopadesa's analysis of the jhāna factors of each of the four jhānas accords well with the suttas. According to the Peṭ akopadesa, the first jhāna has five factors, the second jhāna has four factors, the third jhāna has five factors, and the fourth jhāna has four factors. The jhāna factors are listed in the following table.

first jhāna (paṭhamajjhāna)	second jhāna (dutiyaajjhāna)	third jhāna (tatiyaajjhāna)	fourth jhāna (catutthajjhāna)
directed thought (vitakka)	joy (pīti)	pleasure (sukha)	equanimity (upekkhā)
evaluation (vicāra)	pleasure (sukha)	equanimity (upekkhā)	neither-pleasure-nor-pain (adukkhamasukhā)
joy (pīti)	internal clarity (ajjhata sampasādana)	mindfulness (sati)	purity of mindfulness (satipārisuddhi)
pleasure (sukha)	singleness of mind (cittakaggatā)	full awareness (sampajāna)	singleness of mind (cittakaggatā)
singleness of mind (cittakaggatā)		singleness of mind (cittakaggatā)	

### The Nimitta of Jhāna

Depending upon the context in which the term is used, nimitta can refer to either (i) a cause, or (ii) a mental representation. MN 44 tells us that one of the four applications of mindfulness is the nimitta which serves as the cause for the eventual elimination of the five hindrances and, beyond that, the arising of the five concomitant mental factors of the first jhāna. And according to AN 9.35, the nimitta as the mental representation of the first jhāna is the presence of these same five concomitant jhāna factors. AN 9.35 states that this nimitta is to be developed, pursued, and established. And when properly engaged, these five factors work in consort to refine and maintain what DN 9 calls an actual refined recognition of joy and pleasure born of seclusion (vivekajapītisukhasukhumasaccasaññā).

Therefore, according to the earliest strata of the Pāḷi dhamma there is no need to establish a jhāna nimitta (or samathanimitta or cittanimitta) apart from the jhāna factors. The various practices categorized under the four applications of mindfulness are the samādhinimittas which serve as the cause of jhāna. The concomitant jhāna factors themselves are the nimitta which is the cognitive sign of having attained the first jhāna. This doesn't mean that one abandons the object-support (ārammaṇa), such as the representation of the breath, when the jhāna factors arise. It just means that the most reliable and accurate sign of jhāna is the presence of the jhāna factors, and not any other phenomena.

That said, some contemporary teachers and commentators have suggested that the representation of light (obhāsanimitta) and the representation of form (rūpanimitta) mentioned in MN 128 Upakkilesa Sutta are canonical references to what later came to be designated as the counterpart representation (paṭibhāganimitta) in the commentaries, and thus establishes that these nimittas were considered an essential aspect of the development of jhāna even in the early tradition.

There are a couple of points worth mentioning in this regard. Firstly, MN 128 is the only discourse where the term nimitta is used in this context. None of the other canonical occurrences of nimitta as either samādhinimitta, samatha nimitta, or cittanimitta refer to any of these nimittas being an obhāsanimitta or rūpanimitta as explained in the Upakkilesa Sutta.

Secondly, nowhere in the Upakkilesa Sutta does it state that either the obhāsanimitta or the rūpanimitta are essential prerequisites for attaining the first jhāna. Nor does this sutta maintain that the complete elimination of any experience of the five sensory spheres is essential for the arising of either of these two mental representations. Therefore, while these representations of light and visions of form can occur during the course of meditational development, there is no explicit

statement here, or elsewhere in the suttas, that such representations must arise for one to enter jhāna. Indeed, even the commentarial tradition doesn't maintain that either of these types of nimittas are essential for the first jhāna.

For example, the Vimuttimaggā takes the instructions offered in the Upakkilesa Sutta to refer to the development of the divine eye. This is understandable, as Anuruddhā, the main interlocutor in this discourse with the Buddha, was later designated as the foremost disciple endowed with the divine eye.

And not even the Visuddhimaggā limits counterpart representations to those of light or visionary forms. According to the Visuddhimaggā analysis, of the thirty meditations which lead to jhāna, twenty-two have counterpart representations as object. And of these, only nineteen require any sort of counterpart representation which is apprehended based solely on sight, and can therefore give rise to a mental image resulting from that nimitta (the ten stages of corpse decomposition and nine kasīṇas, excluding the air kasīṇa which can be apprehended by way of either sight or tactual sensation).

And so taking all of the above into consideration, according to the early Pāḷi dhamma there is no need to establish a jhāna nimitta (or samathanimitta or cittanimitta) apart from the jhāna factors. And even according to the Vimuttimaggā and Visuddhimaggā — where the presentation of the method using a counterpart representation is explicitly developed — there is no suggestion that a counterpart representation necessarily must be a representation of light (obhāsanimitta) or a representation of form (rūpanimitta). Indeed, according to the Vimuttimaggā, when employing mindfulness of breathing in order to attain jhāna, the counterpart representation should be concomitant with the pleasant feeling which arises as one attends to the breath at the nostril area or the area of the upper lip, which is likened to the pleasant feeling produced by a breeze. The text says that this counterpart representation doesn't depend on color or form, and any adventitious mental images which arise in the course of practice should not be attended to.

### **1. Giving thorough attention to the feeling**

If a feeling of bodily tension arises in meditation it is very helpful to give it thorough attention (yoniso manasikāra). This involves not only recognizing that it is present, but also examining the underlying conditions and tendencies associated with the tension. The practice here is to see if there is any mental unhappiness (domanassa) present that is associated with this bodily tension. Is there any mental aversion or resistance there? If so, is there any other emotional content there that you may not even be aware of at first? Any “deeper” emotional conditioning?

The underlying emotional content associated with this uncomfortable feeling of tension could be unacknowledged aversion, or anger, or resentment, or sadness, or grief, or loneliness, or a feeling of a lack of fulfillment. Or it could be fear. Or it could be frustration. Whatever it is — and nobody can uncover this but yourself — but whatever it is, it needs to be identified, and then acknowledged with full awareness. This involves sitting with the emotional content and feeling it — allowing it to fully express itself. See if it changes or shifts to reveal even more subtle levels of resistance or sadness or whatever there is that arises.

### **2. Accepting the feeling with mindfulness and full awareness**

Often, when the emotional conditioning associated with the tension is identified and brought fully into conscious awareness, the bodily feeling of tension, as well as the tactile sensation of tightness itself, will naturally begin to dissolve. But for this to occur, there needs to be some acceptance of the emotional content with mindfulness and full awareness (satisampajañña). Just let it express itself and feel it without any added judgment or aversion. If strong aversion remains towards whatever is being felt, then the associated mental conditions haven't been fully identified and acknowledged.

### **3. Releasing the feeling**

If the feeling has been identified and accepted as it is, yet it still continues, one can begin contemplating the release (paṭinissaggānupassī) of the feeling. It is not yours and you can let go of it. As you breathe mindfully, you can release it moment to moment without judgment. But it's important to remember that often times there is no quick fix. These types of situations usually need to be worked with again and again, using the relevant practices. Eventually, with time and continual practice, it may no longer be an issue.

Developing kindness and compassion for yourself — for the uncomfortable feeling that is present — is also very helpful. Even if you can only develop a little bit of kindness or compassion at first. With practice this can lead to more expansive kindness and compassion. You can recognize that there are many others who experience all sorts of similar feelings — and in some cases, far more painful feelings. Then you can extend kindness and compassion to them as well.

### **Mindfulness of Breathing (Ānāpānassati)**

One who resorts to empty dwellings,

He is a sage, self-controlled.

He should live there, letting go of everything,

That is what is proper for him.

— SN 4.6 Sappa Sutta

The development of mental calm (*samathabhāvanā*) requires sustained and dedicated practice over an extended period of time. And along with sitting meditation, this practice is aided by maintaining ethical conduct (*sīla*), living a life of voluntary simplicity and renunciation (*nekkhamma*), employing sense restraint (*indriya saṃvara*), and thorough reflection (*yoniso manasikāra*). With a consistent and dedicated practice supported by the five or eight precepts, and much meditation retreat, these supporting conditions will eventually lead to the actual refined recognition of joy and pleasure born of seclusion (*vivekajapītisukhasukhumasaccasaññā*). With this, one has developed their meditation practice to the entryway of the first *jhāna*.

In SN 54.9 *Vesālī Sutta*, the Buddha compares the development of meditative composure through mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānassatisamādhī*) to a cool rain cloud dispelling the heat and dust of the hot season.

The development of calm is a process of unifying and centering the mind to calm it down and release it from its habitual discursiveness, and the practice of mindful breathing can help us do just that. But it's important to acknowledge from the outset that this is best approached without any preconceptions or expectations. This is a practice of simply softening and opening. Softening the judgmental heart-mind and opening ourselves to the unmediated experience of the mind's natural clarity, and even beginning to recognize the expansiveness of mind (*mahaggatā citta*) experienced when integral mindfulness (*sammāsati*) develops into integral meditative composure (*sammāsamādhī*).

Two qualities essential for the development of calm are those of nonjudgmental “effortless exertion” and non-striving “surrender” to the object of meditation. The initial object in this case is the nostril area (for one breathing through their nose) or upper lip (for one breathing through their mouth) where the tactual sensation of the in and out-breaths can be felt.

Begin by sitting (either on a chair or cross-legged on the floor) with your back straight but not forced or rigid. Next, simplify matters by recognizing that your experience at this time consists of four simple processes: seeing (visual consciousness), hearing (auditory consciousness), tactual sensation (tactile consciousness), and thinking (mental consciousness). And if you gently close your eyes you've simplified your experience to three. Now you can begin to enter into this experience of tactual sensation by paying attention to either the nostril area or the upper lip as the breath contacts this area. This is the first step toward unifying the mind using the breath as an object-support.

In the *Vesālī Sutta* (SN54.9) the Buddha then gives the first specific instruction regarding mindful breathing as follows:

Now we can turn to the *Paṭ isambhīdāmagga Ānāpānassatikathā* to see how it explains the object-support of mindfulness and where we are advised to station our mindful attention. It states:

*-Sign (nimitta), in-breath, and out-breath, are not objects of a single mind; one who knows these three phenomena well can thereby obtain development.*

*-The monk sits, having established mindfulness at the tip of the nose or on the upper lip....*

And so the suggested area for the placing of our mindful attention is the nostril area for one breathing through the nose, or the upper lip of the mouth for one, who for whatever reason, is unable to breathe through their nose at this time — if one has a cold for example.

(Because nasal breathing seems to be somewhat more effective for establishing mindfulness and thereby calming the mind, I'm going to explain the “sign” only in terms of nasal breathing, but keep in mind that if you're not able to breathe freely through your nose at any time you can simply locate the sign on the upper lip, and proceed from there.)

The nostril area is called the sign for the anchoring of mindfulness. As such, this area is the focus of our attention while we remain mindful of the sensations of the in-breath and out-breath as we breathe, as well as the the felt-sense of this area during the gap that is experienced between the out-breath and the next in-breath when breathing naturally.

Because this area of attention is obviously fairly small (the entire area at the base of the nose surrounding the nostrils), the tactual sensation experienced here between out-breath and subsequent in-breath is fairly subtle, but as the tactual sensations of the in-breath and out-breath are slightly less subtle in comparison, these sensations of the in and out-breath are what aid us to remain focused on this spot between breaths. If you have difficulty at first sensing any tactual sensation between out-breath and in-breath that's okay. Experience shows that over time one's awareness of this area increases in sensitivity, and then this will no longer be an issue.

Now the sutta states that the meditator should discern whether an in-breath and out-breath are long or short. The Paṭiṣambhidāmagga commentary indicates that this just refers to the relative duration of each breath. The injunction is to simply recognize that each breath is unique — no two breaths have exactly the same duration. The idea here isn't to attempt to control the breath in any way, but to just remain attentive to the natural involuntary breathing process that is occurring.

Of course, as soon as that is said one becomes self-conscious and it seems impossible to know if the breath is occurring as it usually does as an involuntary process when we aren't aware of it, or if we really are manipulating it in some way. So to remain aware of the basic involuntary process, simply exhale normally, and wait for the next inhalation. Just watch and wait — and sure enough — there it is. Unprompted by you, the breath breathes, reaches its own level of fullness, and naturally exhales again. The entire process is effortless.

This is a very straightforward and direct form of meditation. There is no effort to manipulate the breath in any way. There is no expectation whatsoever of experiencing anything any more spectacular, or mystical, or ecstatic than the bare tactual sensation just described. Any such notions that one is going to attain or become something spectacular is just more saṃsāric craving (taṇhā) that feeds becoming (bhava), which is the antithesis of the third noble truth — the cessation of unsatisfactoriness. To practice mindful breathing one needs nothing more than a somewhat peaceful environment, working lungs, and air, preferably somewhat clean air. These are the only “paraphernalia” one ever needs to practice the pragmatic meditation that the Buddha taught as mindfulness of in and out breathing. And when practiced over some period of time, this mindfulness of breathing will naturally lead to a unified state of mind, without any added manipulation on our part.

And so returning to the process of meditation: when you're able to remain attentive to each in-breath and out-breath and the sign between each breath, as they occur in sequence, for some period of time (twenty to thirty minutes — you have to judge for yourself what is right for you), without becoming completely distracted by discursive thinking and thereby losing awareness of the object-support as it is presently occurring, you can then expand this area of the sign to include awareness of the felt-sense of the entire body as a whole, as experienced from within.

It's important to mention at this juncture that we're not trying to forcibly suppress discursive thinking so as to remain with our object of mindfulness. Again, attempts at forcible manipulation or suppression are not very helpful. Unless the discursive thoughts that are arising are tainted by one of the hindrances they should simply be left alone. Just remain attentive to the tactual sensation of the present object, while not intentionally giving attention to any sounds or thoughts.

Remember what was said at the outset about simplifying your present experience to tactual sensing, hearing, and thinking, and thereby recognizing that the only spheres that presently interest you are the tactual object sphere (phoṭṭhabbāyatana) and the body sphere (kāyāyatana). These other spheres related to hearing and thinking can in no way block or hinder your full awareness of the tactual sphere and the inner felt-sense of the body unless you intentionally give attention to them. The Vesālī Sutta continues.

Simply expand your sphere of attention to include the awareness of the felt-sense of your whole body as you experience it from within, including the tip of the nose, and including the tactual sensation experienced as the breath. Remain attentive to this expanded awareness of the whole body (sabbakāya).(1)

As you continue to breathe mindfully, you can begin to experience the total sphere of the entire body as a flowing inner energy field. Experience this inner field/sphere as a vibrational “whole” without allowing your awareness to collapse by focusing attention on any particular point within the felt-sense of the entire sphere. Recognize that the shape of your body represents the shape and expanse of this inner field. Relax into this experience without being either for or against any particular inner sensation that's arising. Just go deeply into this experience of the inner felt-sense of the body. When either “hearing” or “thinking” arise simply let them go by remaining with this ongoing internal flux — this inner felt-sense of the whole body.

While remaining aware of the entire felt-sense of this inner energy sphere, and without forcing the breath in any way, simply notice a subtle expansion of the whole body as you breathe in, and then a very slight deflation as you breathe out. The body is like a three-quarters filled balloon inflating slightly and deflating slightly. The inner felt-sense of the body is the airy space inside the balloon. Just remain aware of this natural process as it is occurring. Once again, this is a very straightforward and direct form of meditation. There is no effort to manipulate the breath in any way.

There is a subtle shift occurring at this stage, away from the external tactual sensations resulting from the breath contacting the nostril area, and deeper and deeper into the inner felt-sense of the body. Specifically, this is a movement away from tactile consciousness (kāyaviññāṇa, which is dependent upon external sensory contact for its arising), toward experiencing the inner body through mental consciousness (manoviññāṇa).

And with some practice, one recognizes that this expansive experience of the entire inner felt-sense of the body is one of the most rewarding, naturally satisfying, healthful, and serene states of awareness possible. With this simple recognition one naturally chooses to enter into this inner felt-sense as often as possible, and thereby experience tranquility and calm. In this way the development of calm, very naturally, over time, leads to more and more subtle and refined states of bodily and mental ease. And during sitting practice, the experience of the breath becomes more and more refined.

This concise introduction covers the basic development of calm using the breath as object, as the initial steps toward unifying the mind and developing the mental factors of the first jhāna. Exactly where the preliminary development of calm ends and jhāna begins is subjective, and therefore a matter for each meditator to discern for him or herself. That said, there are some specific mental factors that we can become aware of, which are clear indications of the first jhāna. We will investigate this more refined stage of the development of calm on the next page.

## Notes

1. There are differing interpretations of this third step of the first tetrad of ānāpānassati regarding ‘experiencing the whole body’ (sabbakāya-paṭi isamvedī). Ven. Bodhi’s footnote to this step in the *Ānāpānassati Sutta* is relevant here. From *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, 2001 ed.:

“MA [Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā] explains ‘experiencing the whole body’ (sabbakāya-paṭi isamvedī) as signifying that the meditator becomes aware of each in-breath and out-breath through its three phases of beginning, middle, and end. In the first edition I followed this explanation and added in brackets ‘of breath’ after ‘the whole body.’ In retrospect, however, this interpretation seems forced, and I now prefer to take the phrase quite literally. It is also difficult to see how paṭi isamvedī could mean ‘is aware of,’ as it is based on a verb meaning ‘to experience.’”

Ven. Bodhi expands on this point in his *Majjhima Nikāya Lectures: A Systematic Study of the Majjhima Nikāya ‘Exploring the Word of the Buddha,’ Lecture On MN 118: Ānāpānassati Sutta*:

“I used to think that the commentary was completely correct on this, but then it struck me to just focus on the Pāli words sabbakāya, which simply means ‘whole body,’ and also the word that comes after that, paṭi isamvedī. Now the word paṭi isamvedī has the sense of ‘experiencing’ rather than the sense of awareness or knowing. It’s more akin to what you might call the feeling aspect of experience than to the knowing aspect of experience. In fact, the root of this word is related to the word vedanā which means feeling. And so what seems to me to be taking place here is that while breathing in and breathing out one’s awareness (or range of experience) is now expanding to the point that it can encompass the whole body and take in the whole body while one’s attention is still fixed at this particular point at the nostrils where one feels the breath most distinctly coming in and going out.

“And I think this can be related to one’s experience in the jhānas in that it might be suggesting a stage in the development of mindfulness of breathing either approaching close to the jhāna or within the jhāna itself. I find some support for this if one takes a look at the Mahā-Assapura Sutta, which gives a standard way of explaining the four jhānas. The text describes a monk who has abandoned the five hindrances and who ‘enters upon and abides in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion. He makes the rapture and pleasure born of seclusion drench, steep, fill, and pervade this body, so that there is no part of his whole body...’ (it uses the expression sabbakāya), ‘... unpervaded by the rapture and pleasure born of seclusion.’ And then the text goes on to use the simile of the barber or barber’s apprentice who prepares a ball of bathing powder or shaving powder in a metal basin, sprinkles it with water, and then mixes it so that the water entirely pervades the soap powder inside and out. We get a similar simile in each of the next three paragraphs. Each paragraph includes the expression of the ‘whole body’ being completely pervaded by the qualities within each particular jhānic attainment.

“Coming back to the Ānāpānassati Sutta, I don’t think this sentence necessarily indicates that the meditator has already reached the jhāna, but it seems to indicate what I would call a widening or expanding of the range of experience so that as the pīti and sukha — the rapture and happiness, the joy and happiness — are building up along with the development of concentration, they’re now experienced as pervading the whole body. And so with attention still focused at the nostrils, or around the nostrils, he’s experiencing that joy and happiness extending through the whole body.”

And Ven. Ṭhānissaro’s footnote on the same line from the *Ānāpānassati Sutta*:

“The commentaries insist that ‘body’ here means the breath, but this is unlikely in this context, for the next step — without further explanation — refers to the breath as ‘bodily fabrication.’ If the Buddha were using two different terms to refer to the breath in such close proximity, he would have been careful to signal that he was redefining his terms (as he does below,

when explaining that the first four steps in breath meditation correspond to the practice of focusing on the body in and of itself as a frame of reference). The step of breathing in and out sensitive to the entire body relates to the many similes in the suttas depicting jhāna as a state of whole-body awareness (see MN 119).”

### **Meditative Composure Through Mindfulness of Breathing (Ānāpānassatisamādhī)**

A monk with a mind at peace,  
Gone to an empty place,  
Clearly seeing the dhamma thoroughly—  
His delight is more than human.  
— Dhammapada 373

Jhāna, according to the Buddha, is a stable state of mental unification and composure. This state of unification proceeds through four stages of refinement, characterized by progressively greater suppleness, expansiveness, mental calm and equanimity. But before the first stage of jhāna can be attained, the meditator must be free of the five hindrances of (i) impulsive desire for sensual pleasure, (ii) aversion, (iii) bodily lethargy and mental drowsiness, (iv) restlessness and anxiety, and (v) doubt. If any one of these hindrances are present, we are advised to take up an appropriate antidote to eliminate it.

Mindfulness of breathing can itself serve as an effective antidote for all five hindrances, but if at any time one finds that it isn't sufficient there are other contemplations which can serve as effective antidotes to each hindrance. AN 1.2 Nīvaraṇaṃ appahāṇaṃ avagga lists effective remedies to employ for each hindrance.

The contemplation of unattractiveness is an antidote for desire regarding sensual pleasure in that it instills an attitude of renunciation. Loving-kindness is the primary antidote for aversion, and as such instills an attitude of non-aversion. The arousal of energy for abandoning bodily lethargy and mental drowsiness is straightforward. The suttas also mention other antidotes for abandoning lethargy and drowsiness such as stretching and walking meditation. Contemplating the uncertainty of the moment of death is also a very powerful antidote to re-invigorate our motivation. Regarding the hindrance of mental restlessness and anxiety, mindfulness of breathing is often given as an appropriate antidote. Finally, if doubt about the purpose or efficacy of dhamma practice arises, one can thoroughly reflect on the conditioned arising of phenomena and discern that the Buddha was correct and unerring in what he taught. Alternatively one can engender an attitude of faith by recollecting the qualities of the Buddha to inspire the heart and let go of any doubts.

When our practice has developed and there are no hindrances present we can then proceed towards entry into the first jhāna. DN 2 Samaññaphala Sutta gives us a summary overview of this progression from the abandoning of the hindrances to the entry into jhāna:

Seeing that [the five hindrances] have been abandoned within him, he becomes glad. Glad, he becomes joyful. Joyful, his body grows tranquil. His body tranquil, he experiences pleasure. Feeling pleasure, his mind becomes composed.

### **The Four Jhānas (Cattāri Jhānāni)**

Jhāna is described as “singleness of mind” (cittakaggatā) where the mind is unified with the the inner felt-sense of the body. This mental unification with the inner felt-sense of the body means that awareness completely suffuses the entire body, and that the felt-sense of the body is experienced in its totality. In this way the mind and the inner felt-sense of the body are unified and expand to completely pervade each other. But this in no way means that the internal experience of the body remains fixed in a static state. The inner felt-sense of the body is experienced as a continual flux of subtle vibrational energy-sensations occurring concurrently with various mental fabrications such as mindfulness (sati), attention (manasikāra), feeling (vedanā), recognition (saññā), etc. It's this unification of the mind with the inner felt-sense of the body that gives rise to the jhāna factors of joy and pleasure (pītisukha). Accordingly, in the four jhānas the aggregates are still experienced, but the mind is internally centered and unified to a level of calm and sensory withdrawal wherein no external sensory phenomena distract the mind from attention to the entire felt-sense of the body and the various concomitant mental factors of jhāna.

The meditative composure of jhāna progresses through four stages of refinement wherein the mind becomes increasingly calmer and the experiential quality of the inner felt-sense of the body becomes increasingly more subtle. The attainment of the first jhāna is signaled by the presence of five mental factors: directed thought (vitakka), evaluation (vicāra), joy (pīti), pleasure (sukha), and singleness of mind (cittakaggatā).

As one's meditation becomes more refined the coarser of these mental factors begin to fall away and one simply remains attentive to the more subtle concomitant factors that remain. This progression is partly volitional (i.e. one intentionally begins to evaluate the drawbacks of the coarser qualities and the usefulness of the more refined qualities) and partly the spontaneous outcome of the natural calming of the mind (i.e. as the mind becomes more settled it spontaneously abandons the coarser factors). But please remember what was mentioned previously. The volitional intention required here is very

subtle, being a nonjudgmental effortless exertion and a non-striving surrender to the practice. It's an open ended process of opening and unifying and is not goal oriented. Any sort of forceful exertion or expectations of a preconceived result are certainly hindrances and will bear no fruit.

The following discussion is a continuation of what was discussed previously pertaining to calming the body fabrication (the breath) as stated in the Vesālī Sutta. Once awareness of the entire internal felt-sense of the body has been stabilized (the experience of which isn't dependent upon any external sensory impingement), and the breath has gone from its usual quality to a more subtle quality as a result of unifying the mind with the body, we can begin to shift our frame of reference regarding the inner felt-sense of the body. Now instead of focusing on the bare inner energy-sensation of the body, we can focus on the quality of happiness that the mind is experiencing in relation to its unified contact with the inner felt-sense of the body. Specifically, we can begin to notice the mental factor of joy (pīti) present as the mind begins to settle and become increasingly composed.

### **The First Jhāna (Paṭ hama Jhāna)**

The standard jhāna formula in the context of the development of meditative composure through mindfulness of breathing (ānāpānassatisamādhī) is stated in SN 54.8 Paṭipopama Sutta.

The progression from focusing on the internal felt-sense of the body to focusing on the arisen mental factor of joy (pīti) and bodily pleasure (sukha) represents our movement toward and into the first jhāna. As this is a subjective experience, the mental and bodily qualities that we're about to discuss will vary somewhat from person to person and even from sitting to sitting. Nevertheless, there are some general indicators that we can become aware of as we progress from a discursive mind involved in external sensory impingement, to a unified mind characterized by internal happiness and well-being, and beyond that, an experience of serene tranquility.

While the phenomenal factors of joy and pleasure may seem to be similar, there are subtle and distinctive differences that we can become aware of. And as joy (pīti) is the coarser of the two qualities, we first turn our attention to it.

Remaining unified with the entire internal felt-sense of the body, experienced in its totality, we begin to focus on the mental quality of joy when it arises. This joy is mental (i.e. not bodily) and is more than just the bare mental feeling (vedanā) of pleasure associated with the contact between the settled mind and the inner body sphere. Synonyms for this joy include: gladness (pāmojja), delight (āmodanā), joyfulness (pamodanā), shining mirth (bhāsa pabhāsa), felicity (vitti), elation (odagya), satisfaction (attamantā), and mental uplift (cittassa).<sup>3</sup>

So what we're talking about here is an affective mental quality that can range from a sense of internal satisfaction (openness and joyous ease) to ecstatic bliss. Again, the experience will vary from occasion to occasion and person to person. But whatever this quality is for each of us individually, it arises as a direct result of the unification of mind with the inner felt-sense of the entire body. There's nothing necessarily ecstatic or blissful about this experience. The mind simply enjoys paying attention to the body and being free from the hindrances and all associated worldly concerns. By breathing mindfully, paying attention and surrendering to the whole felt-sense of the body, and thereby allowing the breath to calm itself, a sense of ease, lightness, and happiness spontaneously arises. It's the basic goodness of not being preoccupied by any concerns, which then leads to a sense of openness and joy as the mind continues to settle.

That said, powerful experiences of ecstatic bliss and profoundly delightful experiences of the heart area spontaneously opening and being saturated with feelings of universal love, or strong vibrational currents within the body causing it to tremble or spasm uncontrollably, or other similar occurrences *can* certainly arise. This is usually more common when one sits for long sessions in retreat (1.5 to 4 or more hours per sitting). Although some of these powerful experiences of pīti can be very pleasurable, some of them can be so enticing that the meditator gets stuck trying to recreate the experience in every sitting. Such experiences can also overwhelm one's mental calm. And so these very powerful types of pīti can actually be more of a hindrance than a help if not worked with skillfully. Therefore, it's appropriate to consult with an experienced meditation teacher should these types of experience arise.

Returning now to the less extreme experiences of joy: by intentionally focusing on this open sense of internal satisfaction, this quality of joyous happiness, the concomitant experience of the inner felt-sense of the body may begin to intensify into tingling sensations throughout the body (often along the spine and scalp), or the mental happiness itself may open into a sense of either subtle or very profound well-being (the profound type of well-being can feel like passing through an invisible

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3 This register of near-synonyms and synonyms for pīti is given in the Paṭisambhidāmagga Ānāpānassatikathā and the Dhammasaṅgaṇī

“membrane” wherein all sense of constriction is simply gone). It may be blissful (colored or white lights can appear before the closed eyelids) or it may just be an experience of internal joyous pleasure.

Regardless of what presents itself, the idea is to continue to unify mind and body by paying attention to and acknowledging the mental factor of joyous well-being present, and not trying to manufacture or force something that isn’t there. The suttas describe this joyous ease and pleasure permeating and pervading the entire body in the following terms:

He drenches, steepes, fills, and permeates this very body with the joy and pleasure born of seclusion so that there is no part of his whole body that is not permeated by joy and pleasure born of seclusion.

The Sumaṅgalavilāsinī commentary on the Sāmaññaphala Sutta explains this passage as follows<sup>4</sup>:

“This very body:” this body born of action [i.e. born of kamma]. “He drenches:” he moistens, he extends joy and pleasure everywhere. “Steepes:” to flow all over. “Fills:” like filling a bellows with air. “Permeates:” to touch all over.

“His whole body:” in this monk’s body, with all its parts, in the place where acquired [material] continuity occurs there is not even the smallest part consisting of skin, flesh, and blood that is not permeated with the pleasure of the first jhāna.

Even though these descriptions make it sound like this practice requires some amount of exertion, experience reveals that this is actually quite a passive process. The only volitional quality required here — over and above attention to the mental factor of joy presently occurring — is to simply attend to this joyous ease and pleasure permeating and pervading the entire body. MN 119 Kāyagatāsati Sutta describes this experience with the following simile.

Here we recognize that this mental joy isn’t something separate from the awareness of the entirety of the felt-sense of the body. As joy pervades the entire mind, it simultaneously permeates the entire body because the mind is aware of the entire body. It’s that straightforward. And with dedicated practice, this experience naturally and spontaneously opens into a much vaster awareness than words can adequately describe.

When mental joy and bodily pleasure are sufficiently developed and refined there spontaneously occurs an opening and vast expansion of the mind. An entirely new panorama of experience opens up. The mind and the concomitant jhāna factors of joy and pleasure expand beyond the limits of one’s physical body. This is what is designated as an expansive liberation of mind (mahaggatā cetovimutti). All the jhāna factors align in complete harmony in what DN 9 refers to as the actual refined recognition of joy and pleasure born of seclusion (vivekajapītisukhasukhumasaccasaññā). Again, it’s difficult to put this experience into words in a text. To say the least, conventional states of awareness are constricted in comparison to this vast, expansive mind filled with joy and pleasure. When this sweet fruit of the ascetic life is experienced one understands what the terms listed as jhāna factors actually refer to.

But this is not a non-perceptive state of trance-like absorption. Employing clear seeing (vipassanā) one still knows the various concomitant mental phenomena arising in jhāna one by one as they occur (anupadadhammavipassanā). As the Buddha says in MN 111 Anupada Sutta (speaking of Ven. Sāriputta’s jhāna practice).

And as AN 9.36 informs us, one need progress no further than the first jhāna in order to discern phenomena and thereby give rise to nonfashioning (atammayatā) and incline toward the death-free (amatadhātu).

Nevertheless, if we so choose, we are free to develop jhāna to a more refined stage of unification and calm. To do this we simply continue to intentionally focus on the concomitant mental factors of joy (pīti) and bodily pleasure (sukha). Over time, as we develop this practice, the mental factors of directed thought and evaluation will begin to subside as the mind grows increasingly satisfied and calm. When this stage is reached these factors of thought and evaluation no longer receive the fuel that they need to sustain their operation. This doesn’t necessarily mean that at this point there are never any thoughts arising whatsoever. But it does mean that the mind has reached a state of unification which it realizes is superior to any state of even subtle discursive movement. The mind has abandoned attention to apperceptions associated with directed thought. It has realized the satisfaction, stillness, and internal clarity of the silent mind.

This stilling of directed thought is a natural process and doesn’t need to be intentionally willed during meditation. We just surrender completely to the experience of joy and pleasure and allow the path of practice to take its course. As SN 48.10

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#### 4 Dīghanikāya Sumaṅgalavilāsinī Sīlakkhandhavagga Aṭṭhakathā Sāmaññaphalasuttavaṇṇanā



Dutiyaṅga Sutta states, the development of the faculty of concentration involves understanding that letting go is our object (vossaggārammaṇa). Over time — weeks, months, years, decades — the mind settles and lets go of discursive conceptualization during sitting meditation. This is aided by our ongoing development of sense restraint (indriya saṁvara), clear seeing (vipassanā), and the increasing integration of the entire eightfold path. Together with a committed daily meditation practice, preferably in conjunction with regular retreat periods, our integrated path allows us to be able to relinquish coarse thoughts which we realize are often a cause of further stress and becoming, and by so doing we begin to enter into the stillness of the silent mind.

And in sitting practice, when directed thought and evaluation subside, what remains is:

### **The Second Jhāna (Dutiya Jhāna)**

Again, returning to the Paṭīpāpama Sutta (SN54.8):

Here the intentional focus remains on the concomitant phenomena of joy and pleasure, but the qualities of joy and pleasurable feeling begin to become more refined as the mind experiences deepening calm through unification and composure. The Kāyagatāsati Sutta (MN119) supplies the following description.

This image clearly indicates that joy and pleasure aren't dependent upon any external sensory impingement, but arise from the mind's composed unification with the internal felt-sense of the body.

At this stage we can begin to shift our attention from the quality of joy to the underlying feeling tone (vedanā) of pleasure (sukha) that is present. What we're talking about here is the basic quality of bare pleasure arising from our unification of mind and body. This is more basic than any mental fabrications (saṅkhāras) of elation or bliss which may or may not still be present. We simply remain attentive to the quality of pleasure without trying to manipulate it in any way.

And here too, our experience of the second jhāna isn't a state of trance-like absorption. Clear seeing (vipassanā) is still able to single out the mental phenomena present in this jhāna. The Anupada Sutta (MN111).

And if the meditator, instead of inclining toward the death-free dhātu at this point, continues to focus on the quality of the entire pleasurable felt-sense of the body, mental joy (pīti) will spontaneously begin to subside, leaving:

### **The Third Jhāna (Tatiya Jhāna)**

The Paṭīpāpama Sutta (SN54.8):

And we continue to attend to the pleasure of equanimity associated with the felt-sense of the entire body. The Kāyagatāsati Sutta (MN119) adds:

What remains at this stage of jhānic unification is simply a pleasurable feeling associated with bodily equanimity and well-being. One continues to intentionally focus on the pleasure of bodily equanimity present, and also fully comprehends that this is a very refined abiding. Mindfulness and full awareness are now incredibly clear. And here too, one can clearly see the concomitant arising of the other mental factors present in this jhāna. The Anupada Sutta (MN111).

And finally, if the meditator, instead of inclining toward the death-free dhātu at this point, continues to focus on the quality of the entire felt-sense of the body, the experience of pleasure will eventually spontaneously subside, leaving:

### **The Fourth Jhāna (Catuttha Jhāna)**

The Paṭīpāpama Sutta (SN54.8):

This is the full unified attainment of jhāna. It's the complete unification of the whole body with pure, bright awareness. Mindfulness and full awareness are now as clear and refined as possible. This is the purity of mindfulness which is the culmination of the development of right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. See Kāyagatāsati Sutta continues (MN119)

Here too we can clearly see the concomitant mental factors that are present. This requires a very precise balance between calm and clear seeing. If one absorbs too deeply into the quality of calm it will impair the mind's ability to engage in clear seeing. The Anupada Sutta (MN111).

At this point, or indeed at any point after the stabilization of the first jhāna, we can apply discernment (paññā), according to whichever of the three characteristics we choose to contemplate. This involves clearly seeing conditioned phenomena of body and mind as being impermanent, unsatisfactory, and therefore not-self. The Jhāna Sutta (AN 9.36).

Phrased in terms of the discernment of the four noble truths resulting in the ending of the mental outflows (āsavas), this fruitional insight process is articulated in DN 2 Samaññaphala Sutta. After describing the fourth jhāna, and the five mundane

higher gnoses (lokiya abhiññā) that can arise from mastering the four jhānas, the discourse goes on to describe the supramundane higher gnosis (lokuttara abhiññā) of complete liberation, which is the extinction of the mental outflows. This liberation is described as occurring while still employing the same level of concentration as the fourth jhāna. It's important to remember that the first noble truth includes the five aggregates of clinging.

-The reality is that in our previous conversations you've repeatedly insisted that the discourses in question do not mean what they say. But there is nothing esoteric about these discourses. They aren't employing some sort of twilight language which relies on a hidden code to draw out some meaning obscured by the terminology being used. This is why the Buddha is recorded as stating that the discourses should be taught using the language of the people being addressed. They don't require a highly specialized technical vocabulary. Nor do they require a priestly or scholarly elite to decode obscured meanings. Your entire argument throughout has amounted to nothing more than an attempt to draw out conclusions to support your preconceived thesis regarding feeling as it pertains to jhāna. Not only does your hermeneutic have little to recommend for it – I would suggest that you're grasping the wrong end of the snake. And for what purpose? In support of an interpretation of jhāna which refuses to accept the explicit teachings of a vast number of discourses, as well as the majority of early ābhīdhammika commentaries? An interpretation of mental factors in the context of jhāna which refuses to survey and acknowledge the full register of how these terms are designated, defined, and differentiated throughout the canon?

-During our entire conversation you never once produced a single source from the discourses to support your interpretation of SN 36.6 Salla Sutta that bodily feeling as it is used in this sutta is meant to include feeling born of mind contact. In fact, your entire premise in this case is just one example of your stretching the meaning of two terms to the point where there is no meaningful differentiation between them. Moreover, in your zeal to sustain your thesis your interpretation fails to recognize the soteriological import of this discourse: the distinction between how a noble disciple (ariyasāvaka) experiences bodily pain in comparison to a common person.

-Piya Tan would be well advised to study MN 111 more closely, as well as the Dhammasaṅgaṇī and the Paṭisambhidāmagga Ānāpānassatikathā in order to understand that the mental factors mentioned in MN 111 are fully accounted for as being present and known through the mental factor of vipassanā while one is correctly abiding in jhāna as the proper training of heightened mind (adhicittasikkhā).

There are basically three approaches to mental development in the context of meditation:

- (i) attention training where one absorbs into a single object and thereby stills all mental factors to the point where, as Ajahn Brahmavamso explains, "Consciousness is so focused on the one thing that the faculty of comprehension is suspended ... there is no comprehension of what is going on."
- (ii) attention training where one attends to a single object and thereby calms and unifies all mental factors to the point where, as Leigh Brasington explains, "It is possible to examine the experience because the state is so stable and self sustaining on its own."
- (iii) attention training where one attends to whatever occurs in the present moment (either with the aid of a support object such as abdominal movement, or choiceless awareness without the aid of a support object).

It is only in the first of these three approaches that the five senses must necessarily be shut down and ceased for that resultant state to be entered and sustained. However, the lack of comprehension in this state makes it impossible for vipassanā to occur while abiding therein.

The resultant state of the second approach allows for the mind to be internally unified while still fully comprehending the mental factors present. Thus vipassanā can be fully present and functional while abiding therein. Ajahn Chah describes the resultant state of this second approach as follows:

*In appana samadhi the mind calms down and is stilled to a level where it is at its most subtle and skilful. Even if you experience sense impingement from the outside, such as sounds and physical sensations, it remains external and is unable to disturb the mind. You might hear a sound, but it won't distract your concentration. There is the hearing of the sound, but the experience is as if you don't hear anything. There is awareness of the impingement but it's as if you are not aware. This is because you let go. The mind lets go automatically. Concentration is so deep and firm that you let go of attachment to sense impingement quite naturally. The mind can absorb into this state for long periods. Having stayed inside for an appropriate amount of time, it then withdraws.*

-With this in mind, it's really a matter of what each of us has tried and found helpful for our own practice. All three of these approaches can be developed to the point of attaining the resultant state of that approach if one has the time and commitment to follow their chosen path of practice in a sustained, dedicated way.

-It is only with the first of these three approaches that the five senses must necessarily be shut down and ceased for that resultant state to be entered and sustained. However, the lack of comprehension in this state makes it impossible for vipassanā to occur while abiding therein.

-The resultant state of the second approach allows for the mind to be internally unified while still fully comprehending the mental factors present. Thus vipassanā can be fully present and functional while abiding therein. I consider the resultant meditative state of this second approach to represent an accurate assessment of jhāna as it's presented in the suttas. Other people consider the resultant state of the first approach to be necessary. It's not my intention to debate this issue here. Obviously, everyone is free to make up their own mind regarding what they feel is necessary for their practice.

-The third approach can eventually lead to the resultant state of the second approach, but it isn't a direct pathway to that state of mental unification. The level of concentration employed in this third approach is often designated as "momentary concentration." This approach can be applied as somewhat of a conjoined calm (samatha) and vipassanā method. By using the instruction to follow the movement of the abdomen as one breathes and to come back to that as the support object after any distractions, this approach enables many practitioners to develop deep samatha in the course of their practice. Thus this approach can certainly lead to jhāna. This is entirely in keeping with what is outlined in the suttas.

-I think that we each have to identify and map our mental terrain based on our own first hand investigation and experience. If we can take the time to attend to our mind when we're sitting with our body somewhat relaxed, mindfully breathing, we can begin to investigate how our mind works: Can I differentiate between a thought and the recognition (saññā) of a thought? This is a good start. Right here we can begin to see that there's no separate observer independent of that simple recognition of the thought. Can I reflect upon the drawbacks of discursive thinking? Can I begin to just release thoughts as they arise? If I just release my indulgence with thinking can I experience a gap between the end of one thought and the arising of another? -It doesn't really matter if our mind settles and relaxes when we investigate how it works, or if we can experience much of a gap between thoughts, or if the mind just continues to chatter on. The important thing is that we really want to learn how our mind works. And one thing that can be pretty obvious right away is that we aren't really in full control of our mind. The mind operates according to causes and conditions. There's no one running the show. Seeing this we can learn to create the suitable causes and conditions which allow us to investigate our mind again and again. We can investigate how our body and our breath affect the movements of the mind, and so on.

-No one can do this inner work for us. We each have to take the time to begin to investigate our inner mental terrain. It can be a rewarding experience which begins to yield some insights into how the mind works. And I think that this was part of the Buddha's genius. He was interested in how things work. He realized that understanding how the mind works is essential if we are going to untangle the tangle that we may currently find ourselves in.

-I think it's possible that some people don't spend more time on the fifth step because they may not think that they've "attained *jhāna*" or can "experierapture." But we don't necessarily have to have "attained" anything in order to experience pīti. In this case, the translation of pīti as *rapture* probably doesn't help. What the heck is *rapture*?...

-But pīti doesn't just mean rapture. It's the mental *joy* which is present whenever we experience any skillful feeling of pleasure or well-being. And so we don't have to be drenched in bliss in order to practice the fifth step of mindful breathing. If we are sitting in meditation and our body is relaxed and we are feeling at ease and our mind is clear and aware, we can certainly begin to investigate what pīti means in that situation: Can we recognize if the mind is happy? Can there be some degree of mental joy when we sit relaxed and breathe mindfully?

-This is the important affective quality of the path which is to be developed and used to aid us in letting go; not always searching for something outside of ourselves for fulfillment. I think that we all need to empower ourselves and give ourselves permission to sit and just enjoy the very simple act of breathing mindfully.

But is it possible to practice, say, steps 1 to 4, then 5, and 13? I think that's possible.

-Or alternatively, as I've reflected upon the Paṭ isambhīdāmagga Ānāpānassatikathā, I've come to see that although the steps are set out sequentially in the sutta, it's also possible to practice two or more steps concurrently at the same time. For example, once step three (whole body) is established, that whole body awareness can serve as the basis and support for the remaining steps to be experienced along with that whole body awareness.

-And so when step four is being practiced, is it possible to begin just noticing if there is any concomitant gladness arising? Is the mind happy? Is there enthusiasm in my practice right now? These are all either similar to pīti or synonyms for pīti. There is a progression of the practice here, but it's not like we're leaving step three or four behind us when we practice step five or six or thirteen.

-Again, we all have to work with the practice gently, and from time to time make small, skillful adjustments to find out if these steps can open up further appreciation and understanding of our inner mental terrain. But not by overexerting. It's a question of appropriate balance which is unique to each of us. Striving too forcefully isn't going to create the optimal causes and conditions for the path to develop, nor is blankly spacing out. We each have to find that balance of calm and insight that works for us and allows the practice to open up and unfold.

-Leigh's teachings are very good and certainly experiential, and your above descriptions of pīti and sukha are excellent too. *But...* I so much dislike having to ever add a *but* after a compliment. It's often understood as a negation of what was just

said prior to the *but*. And I don't want to negate your description or Leigh's teachings at all. *Nevertheless...* there's another word like *but*....

-Okay, continuing on: From a purely technical perspective, with reference to the earliest commentaries the two terms are actually understood to be the other way around. Pīti is defined as a mental quality of joy or enthusiasm or delight, etc., and sukha, in the context of jhāna is defined as bodily pleasure.

-Now this is all kinda academic, I know, because both pīti and sukha are formless mental dhammas. But that is how these phenomena are understood in the traditional texts. This doesn't mean that Leigh is wrong at all, because we all have to map our own inner mental terrain. And these two phenomena are related mental aspects of that terrain.

-Of course sammāsati is not the same as sammāsamādhi. Sammāsati is the cause for sammāsamādhi to occur (MN 44). The commentary adds that it is the requisite condition. This fully accords with what Dmytro was indicating above.

-It's worth noting just how closely related mindfulness of the body (kāyānupassanā, kāyagatāsati) and the mental factors of mindfulness and full awareness (sati and sampajañña) are to the development of the four jhānas. This can be seen from the following sutta excerpts:

You should train yourself thus: 'I will remain focused on the body in & of itself — ardent, alert, & mindful — putting aside greed & distress with reference to the world.' That's how you should train yourself. When you have developed this concentration in this way, you should develop this concentration with directed thought & evaluation, you should develop it with no directed thought & a modicum of evaluation, you should develop it with no directed thought & no evaluation, you should develop it accompanied by rapture... not accompanied by rapture... endowed with a sense of enjoyment; you should develop it endowed with equanimity. [AN 8.63]

Monks, those monks who are trainees, who have not attained their mind's ideal, who dwell aspiring for the unsurpassed security from bondage — they too dwell contemplating the body in the body, ardent, alert, unified, with limpid mind, concentrated, with one-pointed mind, in order to fully understand the body as it really is. [SN 47.4]

When one thing is practiced & pursued, the body is calmed (kāya passambhati), the mind is calmed (citta passambhati), thinking & evaluating are stilled (vitakkavicārā vūpasama), and all qualities on the side of clear knowing go to the culmination of their development. Which one thing? Mindfulness immersed in the body (kāyagatāsati). [AN 1.227]

As he remains thus focused on the body in & of itself, his mind becomes concentrated, his defilements are abandoned. He takes note of that fact.... As a result, he is rewarded with a pleasant abiding here & now, together with mindfulness & alertness (satisampajañña). [SN 47.8]

And ānāpānassati also gives rise to ānāpānassatisamādhi. SN 54.8 Paṭipopama Sutta:

Vimuttimagga Chapter on Mindfulness of Breathing:

-Of these sixteen [steps of ānāpānassati], the first twelve fulfill samatha and vipassanā, and are discerned as impermanence. The last four fulfill only vipassanā. Thus should samatha and vipassanā be understood....

-And again, practice means attaining to a state (of jhāna) through mindfulness of breathing. This is practice. Through this mindfulness of breathing, one attains to the state which is with initial application of thought. That is the state which is with initial and sustained application of thought, and the state of sustained application of thought. The experiencing of joy is the state of the second jhāna. The experiencing of pleasure is the state of the third jhāna. The experiencing of the mind is the state of the fourth jhāna.

**Q:** On re-reading Analayo, I discovered one of his notes which leads one to believe whether following the sixteen steps is "do-able" as a concentration exercise unless one is in jhana.

**A:** I don't see anything in the second tetrad of the sutta instructions which would restrict these trainings to only those who have attained jhāna. With practice it's possible in formal sitting meditation to discern some degree of both joy (pīti) and pleasure (sukha) arising together with any pleasurable skillful mind (cf. Dhammasaṅgaṇī Cittuppādaṇḍa). And with the later commentarial designation of access concentration there will certainly be joy and pleasure present therein.

-I'm basing what I've just said on a full spectrum developmental model where practitioners are encouraged to attend and reflect in terms of dynamic conditioned processes, i.e. how to generate optimal causes and conditions for skillful processes to be developed and sustained and unskillful processes to be reduced and eventually abandoned. It's still a hierarchic model, but a dynamic one which confronts and challenges a practitioner's habitual referencing in terms of "things" and rigid, independent levels of mental development.

**Q:** Re : previous posts concerning pīti. I actually understand it better in my own practice as gladness or pamojja (a mental quality) giving rise to pīti (a physical and mental experience). Perhaps the mental part of pīti could be likened to heightened gladness. The pīti then giving rise to sukha a physical & mental experience. Like I said this is just how I understand it within my own practice. I would be interested if anybody could provide sutta evidence that pīti is actually only a mental quality as described in the commentaries.

**A:** I'd suggest that it's really just a question of the designation (i.e. labeling) of what is being experienced.

Anyway, DN 2 states:

Tassime pañca nīvaraṇe pahīne attani samanupassato pāmojjaṃ jāyati, pamuditassa pīti jāyati, pītimanassa kāyo passambhati, passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vedeti, sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati.

Seeing that the five hindrances have been abandoned within him, gladness is born. Gladdened, joy is born. With a joyful mind, his body becomes tranquil. His body tranquil, he experiences pleasure. Feeling pleasure, his mind becomes concentrated.

This implies that pīti is a heightened mental quality related to and arising from gladness (pāmojja). With the onset of pīti the body becomes tranquil (kāyo passambhati), and when the body is tranquil one experiences pleasure (passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vedeti).

And SN 47.10:

Tenānanda, bhikkhunā kismiñcīdeva pasādanīye nimitte cittaṃ paṇ idahitabbaṃ. Tassa kismiñcīdeva pasādanīye nimitte cittaṃ paṇ idahato pāmojjaṃ jāyati. Pamuditassa pīti jāyati.

Then Ānanda, the monk should direct his mind to some inspiring representation. When he directs his mind to some inspiring representation, gladness is born. Gladdened, joy is born.

Pītimanassa kāyo passambhati. Passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vedeti. Sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati. So iti paṭ isañcikkhati – ‘yassa khvāhaṃ atthāya cittaṃ paṇ idahiṃ, so me attho abhinipphanno. Handa, dāni paṭ isamharāmi’ti. So paṭ isamharati ceva na ca vitakketi na ca vicāreti. ‘Avitakkomhi avicāro, ajjhataṃ satimā sukhamasmī’ti pajānāti.’

With a joyful mind, his body becomes tranquil. His body tranquil, he experiences pleasure. Feeling pleasure, his mind becomes concentrated. He reflects thus: ‘The purpose for which I directed my mind has been achieved. Let me now withdraw it.’ So he withdraws his mind and does not think or evaluate. He understands: ‘Without directed thought and evaluation, internally mindful, I am [experiencing] pleasure.’

Also, the Paṭ isambhidāmagga (and the Dhammasaṅgaṇī) offers the following register of near-synonyms and synonyms for pīti: gladness (pāmojja), delight (āmodanā), joyfulness (pamodanā), shining mirth (bhāsa pabhāsa), felicity (vitti), elation (odagya), satisfaction (attamantā), and mental uplift (cittassa).

**Q:** A person can have wisdom (*adhipaññādharmavipassanā*) without internal tranquility (*cetosamatha*): Then there is the case of the individual who has attained insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, but not internal tranquillity of awareness. [AN4.94](#)

**A:** AN 4.94 also includes this instruction for said person:

*As for the individual who has attained insight into phenomena through heightened discernment, but not internal tranquillity of awareness, he should approach an individual who has attained internal tranquillity of awareness... and ask him, 'How should the mind be steadied? How should it be made to settle down? How should it be unified? How should it be concentrated?' The other will answer in line with what he has seen & experienced: 'The mind should be steadied in this way. The mind should be made to settle down in this way. The mind should be unified in this way. The mind should be concentrated in this way.' Then eventually he [the first] will become one who has attained both internal tranquillity of awareness & insight into phenomena through heightened discernment.*

**Q:** Puggalapaññattipālī explains this to mean that one can have Awakening without rūpa or arūpa attainments:

Kathaṇca puggalo lābhī hoti adhipaññādharmavipassanāya, na lābhī ajjhataṃ cetosamathassa? Idhekacco puggalo lābhī hoti lokuttaramaggassa vā phalassa vā, na lābhī rūpasahagatānam vā arūpasahagatānam vā samāpattīnam. - Pug 61

**A:** Jhāna which scrutinizes characteristics (lakkhaṇa upanijjhāna) and supramundane jhāna (lokuttarajjhāna) are still considered necessary.

Lakkhaṇa upanijjhāna isn't limited to magga & phala, it pertains to vipassanā as well. Saṃyuttanikāya Sāratthappakāsinī Sagāthāvagga Aṭṭhakathā 1.36 Saddhāsuttavaṇṇanā:

Tattha lakkhaṇa upanijjhānaṃ nāma vipassanāmaggaṃ phalāni.

Therein, lakkhaṇa upanijjhāna is the name of insight, path, and fruit.

Vipassanā hi tīṇi lakkhaṇāni upanijjhāyātīti lakkhaṇa upanijjhānaṃ.

Insight meditates upon the three characteristics, therefore it is meditation on characteristics.

Magga vipassanāya āgatakkiccam sādhetīti lakkhaṇa upanijjhānaṃ.

The path completes the task begun by insight, therefore it is meditation on characteristics.

Phalaṃ tathalakkhaṇaṃ nirodhasaccam upanijjhāyātīti lakkhaṇa upanijjhānaṃ.

Fruition meditates on the characteristic of reality that is the truth of cessation, therefore it is meditation on characteristics.

For anyone interested in the jhāna related pericopes found in the suttas, here is what the commentary on the Sāmaññaphala Sutta has to offer for the following passage pertaining to the first jhāna:

*He drenches, steeps, fills, and permeates this very body with the joy and pleasure born of seclusion so that there is no part of his whole body that is not permeated by joy and pleasure born of seclusion.*

The commentary explains:

-*This very body*: this body born of action [i.e. born of kamma]. *He drenches*: he moistens, he extends joy and pleasure everywhere. *Steeps*: to flow all over. *Fills*: like filling a bellows with air. *Permeates*: to touch all over.

-*His whole body*: in this monk's body, with all its parts, in the place where acquired [form] continuity occurs there is not even the smallest part consisting of skin, flesh, and blood that is not permeated with the pleasure of the first jhāna.

**Q:** Does this suggest that 5 sense consciousness still function in Jhāna, but that they do not disturb the person in Jhāna?

**A:** Well, the five sense faculties still function, but since the object-support of jhāna is a mental representation, it's accurate to say that the functioning consciousness is mental consciousness. As MN 38 Mahātaṇhāsankhaya Sutta informs us, "Consciousness is reckoned by the particular condition dependent upon which it arises."

Attending to a mental representation (nimitta) in jhāna doesn't require that all the five senses are totally shut down. There is a difference between attending to a mental representation via mental consciousness, and the formless attainments wherein the mind is totally isolated from the five sense faculties. In commentarial terms, attending exclusively to a cognitive representation already occurs at the stage of access samādhi. Thus, the engagement is exclusively that of the recognition of the counterpart representation via mental consciousness. The difference between access samādhi and the first jhāna is the degree of stability of the jhāna factors. The difference between the first jhāna and the formless attainments is indicated in both the Vimuttimagga and the Visuddhimagga when they discuss the formless attainments and mention Aḷ āra Kālāma not seeing or hearing the five-hundred carts passing by when abiding in a formless attainment.

**Q:** If I now agree with you that Jhanic *pitisukha* is *phoṭṭhabba*, we run into the greater problem of MN 43. Only the physical body can "contact" *phoṭṭhabba*. None of the other 4 indriyas of eye, ear, nose and tongue could possibly "contact" *phoṭṭhabba*/tactility.

**A:** Firstly, MN 43 explicitly states that the mano experiences all of these gocaravisaya. Secondly, there is nothing in MN 43 which requires the restrictions of your interpretation. For example, it wouldn't take much effort to use this passage in question to support a model of the mind which allows for concomitant cognitions, such as was proposed in Chapter 8 of the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya specifically in the context of feeling in jhāna, or generally, as in the Yogācārabhūmiśāstra Viniścayasamgrahaṇī.

**Q:** Might you know of any sutta that actually identifies in-&-out breathing as "internal"?

**A:** MN 140.

**Q:** I leave it to you to decide which reading is better, Geoff's reading that *saṅkappaṛāga* be conflated with an external sense object, or *saṅkappaṛāga* being identified with sensual desire.

**A:** There's been no such conflation.

**Q:** In fact, if one looks at an extended version of the allure, gratification, drawback and escape theme, SN 35.13 makes it explicit that the *kāmā* are *justrūpā, saddā, gandhā, rasā and phoṭṭhabbā*.

**A:** Kāmā can either be sense objects or the sensual pleasures which arise in connection with those objects. Singular or plural is irrelevant.